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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine certain objective admission criteria at open admission institutions, eliminating the problem of truncated variable distribution. Minorities who are admitted to selective colleges and universities with lower than average Scholastic Assessment Test or ACT Assessment test scores (1100 and 27, respectively) in contrast with the average scores of Caucasian students (1300 and 30) have nearly equal graduation rates. This study used a random sample of 600 students from 3 open admissions institutions. The results indicate a need to help males actualize their potential, and they demonstrate that a quota system does not serve the needs of minorities. The status of minorities is better addressed by focusing on the ethos of home, family, school, and society to help them become better prepared before applying to college. This study supports the contention that equity occurs when all candidates, similarly prepared, have similar chances of success. The results support the proposition that the United States needs to implement fully the spirit and intent of the Emancipation Proclamation. (Contains 63 references.) (SLD)

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Equitable Access

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Abstract

"Race-sensitive admissions" goes deeper than the Quota System. The abilities of minorities who are admitted to selective colleges and universities with lower than average SAT/A.C.T. scores (1100; 27) in relation to SAT/A.C.T. scores of (1300; 30) for the average Caucasian have nearly equal graduation rates. This study used a random sample of 600 students from three open admissions institutions. The results indicate a great need to help males actualize their potential and that a quota system does not serve the needs of minorities. The status of minorities are better addresses by focusing on the ethos of home, family, school, and society helping them become better prepared prior to applying to college and supports the contention that equity occurs when all candidates, *similarly prepared*, have similar chances of success. The results support the proposition that this nation needs to fully implement both the spirit and intent of the *Emancipation Proclamation*.

Equitable Access

The Committee of Ten tried to identify equitable criteria for evaluating precollegiate background–an effort which continued through the eight year study to the present (Bobbitt, 1934, 1937, 1948; Eliot, 1908, 1905, 1892a, 1892b; Kilpatrick, 1926; Madaus & Stufflebeam, 1989; National Society for the Study of Education, 1927; Original Papers, 1929; Roosevelt, 1907; Sheldon, 1842; Snedden, 1912, 1915, 1919; Tyler, 1930, 1942, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1953, 1959, 1964a, 1964b). Current admissions literature reveals that college admissions officers are bombarded with affirmative action regulations (Olivas, 1979, 1989; Preer, 1982). One manifestation is movement from affirmative action quotas to objective criteria. The belief that affirmative action is the answer to college admission is based on quotas, which would ensure increased admission of certain minorities (Astin, 1985; Harding, 1993). The objective admission literature reveals that students who work hard to meet the minimum requirements for admission to the select colleges and universities are challenged to make better grades, complete college, and go on to graduate schools. Affirmative action guidelines are reverting to objective criteria with the philosophy that college degrees have been cheapened because admissions' standards barely exist except at "elite" institutions (Association of American Colleges, 1985; Bowen, Bok & Burkhart, 1999; Schrag, 1999; Barinaga, 1998; Samuelson, 1998; Williams 1998). Objective criteria examines all students using the same criteria for admission to college (Chandler, 1987, Dubois, 1970, 1965; Ruch, 1929; Rudolph, 1989): high school grade point average, Scholastic Aptitude/American College Test (SAT/A.C.T.) scores from 1100/27 to 1300/30; and, a short essay/interview when a candidate meets other criteria. Students who fall below (1100/27) on the SAT/A.C.T. are admitted to other colleges and remediation is necessary (Abraham, 1991; Boylan, 1986; Clowes, 1980, 1982, 1992; Higbee, 1993). Minorities who fail to score average on the SAT/A.C.T. tests advocate abolishment of tests while objectivists defend objective admission evidence (Kujovich, 1987). Although any admission criterion is hardly a guarantee of academic success they are related to performance (Wooldridge, 1998) and without objective criteria fewer minorities would gain entrance to select colleges.

Most studies of the effectiveness of objective criteria are left wanting because the admission criteria are used for selection of the samples resulting in truncated independent variable distributions (For a complete review see: Hashway, Rogers, Barham, & Jackson, 1998). The purpose of this study is to examine certain objective admission criteria at open admission institutions–eliminating the problem of truncated variable distribution.

Method

The participants were a random sample of 600 undergraduate students from three open admission Southern Universities (Carter, 1992; Hashway, Sandeford-Lyons, Carter, 1999) where 57% were female; nearly half were of the racial majority 53.6%; on a 4.0 scale, the mean (standard deviation) high school grade point average and A.C.T. composite score were 2.97 (0.59) and 16.84 (5.5), respectively. Admission officers view successful students as those students whose Success ratio (number of hours taken/by the number of hours completed) equals 1. Those students are viewed as focused and stay on the task during their college experience. The Repeated Class groups are students who repeated a class that was failed, but can graduate if the success ratio becomes greater than 1. Failure Group students, whose success ratio is less than 1, will not succeed. The Success ratio was used as a dependent variable.

Multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was used with the cumulative & semester collegiate grade point averages as dependent variables; high school grade point average & total A.C.T. score as covariates; and, success ratio, gender, and race as factors. MANCOVA was used as opposed to multiple ANCOVA to avoid type III error as well as to account for the nonorthogonal cell frequencies found in the data which would lead to erroneous parameter estimates that would evolve from repeated ANCOVA (Bock, 1975; Finn, 1974; Jobson, 1992; Winer, 1971). Multivariate tests were examined prior to examining univariate effects. If the multivariate effects are trivial, regardless of the subsidiary effects, nontrivial univariate effects are likely due to chance expectations. All interactions were also examined to avoid interpreting main effects I the presence of interaction–Type IV error (Betz, 1977; Betz & Gabriel, 1978; Games, 1977).

Results & Conclusions

Hotellings multivariate F-ratio was 70.6 (df=4,1182; $p<0.001$) indicating a nontrivial multivariate effect. The covariates, Total A.C.T. Score ($t=5.0$; df-1; $p<0.001$ on cumulative grade point average; and, $t=6.0$; df-1; $p<0.001$ on semester grade point average) and High School Grade Point Average ($t=9.9$; df=1; $p<0.001$ on cumulative grade point average; and, $t=8.9$; df=1; $p<0.001$ on semester grade point average), nontrivially impacted the criterion variables where an increase in high school grade point average of 0.1 corresponds to an increase in cumulative (semester) grade point average of 0.03(0.04) and a change of 5 A.C.T. points corresponds to a cumulative (semester) grade point average change of 0.1(0.15).

Table 1: **CUMULATIVE (SEMESTER) COLLEGE GRADE POINT AVERAGES**

GENDER	ETHNICITY	SUCCESSFUL	REPEATED	FAILURE
Male	**Majority**	2.9 (2.8)	2.5 (2.3)	2.8 (2.6)
	Minority	3.0 (2.9)	2.5 (2.4)	2.7 (2.3)
Female	**Majority**	3.1 (2.9)	2.7 (2.5)	3.1 (2.9)
	Minority	3.0 (2.9)	2.5 (2.4)	2.9 (2.7)

Trivial three way ($F=0.73$; df=4,1170; $p>0$, 55), Success X Ethnicity ($F=1.12$; df=4,1168; $p>0.35$), Gender x Success ($F=1.11$; df=4,1168; $p>0.35$), and Gender x Ethnicity ($F=0.23$; df=2,585; $p>0.80$) interactions were observed. The lack of nontrivial interactions implies that main effects can be examined without committing Type III error. There was a nontrivial success group effect ($F=28.9$; df=4,1168; $p<0.001$). Females tended to consistently earn semester and cumulative grade point averages 0.15 points greater than their male counterparts ($F=7.67$; df=2,585; $p<0.001$). Minority and majority students did **not** exhibit either a cumulative nor semester grade point averages difference after adjusting for covariates ($F=2.61$; df=2,585; $p>0.075$). These results indicate:

1. Equating male and female admission criteria does not eliminate the performance difference between males and females. Males will need compensatory assistance in order to close the gender gap.
2. Objective admission criteria result in a level playing field between the races.

The Gender Gap: The large performance gap between males and females with equal abilities begs for special programs for males. Males often out perform females on admission tests of technical knowledge, which is not reflected in collegiate performance. There is a need for motivational and academic assistance for male students designed to help them actualize their potential.

Equality: Arguments supporting objective admissions standards are supported by these results. It would be a shame to admit underprepared minorities to satisfy a quota only to have them fail within the first year of college. *Equitable access occurs when minority and majority students of equal ability have an equal chance of success.* Minorities perform as well as similarly prepared majority students. Equality will be achieved by discontinuing the use of quotas and properly implementing objective criteria. The status of minorities will be better served by addressing the ethos of the home and society aimed at helping them become properly prepared prior to applying to college (Carter, 1992; Hashway, Edu, Joiner, & Burchfield, 1999).

The results support the proposition that this nation needs to fully implement both the spirit and intent of the *Emancipation Proclamation.*

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